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**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING
STAFF REPORT**

Tentative Notice of Action

MEETING DATE November 13, 2015	CONTACT/PHONE Airlin M. Singewald, Senior Planner (805) 781-5198 asingewald@co.slo.ca.us	APPLICANT T-Mobile/ Templeton Community Services District	FILE NO. DRC2015-00028
EFFECTIVE DATE November 27, 2015			
SUBJECT A request by T-MOBILE AND TEMPLETON COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT (TCSD) for a Minor Use Permit (DRC2015-00028) to allow the construction and operation of an unmanned wireless communications facility, consisting of 8 relocated (from top of adjacent water tank) panel antennas mounted at a height of 52' - 6" on a new 62' tall artificial eucalyptus tree adjacent to T-Mobile's existing equipment compound. The purpose of the project is to relocate T-Mobile's antennas from the top of the water tank to a new artificial eucalyptus tree due to structure capacity concerns with the water tank. The project does not propose new ground equipment. The proposed project will result in approximately 100 square feet of site disturbance on a 1.86-acre parcel in the Residential Single Family land use category. The project site is located at the end of Lincoln Avenue (at 905 Lincoln Avenue), northeast of the Highway 101 Vineyard exit, within the community of Templeton. The site is in the Salinas River sub-area of the North County planning area.			
RECOMMENDED ACTION Approve Minor Use Permit DRC2015-00028 based on the findings listed in Exhibit A and the conditions listed in Exhibit B.			
ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION A Class 3 Categorical Exemption (pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15303) was issued on October 14, 2015 (ED15-107).			
LAND USE CATEGORY Residential Single Family	COMBINING DESIGNATION None	ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER 040-288-044	SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) 1
PLANNING AREA STANDARDS: None applicable <i>Does the project meet applicable Planning Area Standards:</i> Not applicable			
LAND USE ORDINANCE STANDARDS: Section 22.30.180 - Communications Facilities <i>Does the project conform to the Land Use Ordinance Standards:</i> Yes - see discussion			
EXISTING USES: Three water tanks and telecommunications facilities for T-Mobile, AT&T, Sprint, Nextel, Cellular One, and Metro PCS			
SURROUNDING LAND USE CATEGORIES AND USES: <i>North:</i> Residential Single Family / undeveloped <i>East:</i> Residential Single Family / residences <i>South:</i> Residential Single Family / residences <i>West:</i> Residential Single Family / residences			
FINAL ACTION This tentative decision will become final action on the project, effective on the 15 th day following the administrative hearing, or on November 27, 2015, if no hearing was requested unless this decision is changed as a result of information obtained at the hearing or is appealed.			
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & BUILDING AT: COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER γ SAN LUIS OBISPO γ CALIFORNIA 93408 γ (805) 781-5600 γ FAX: (805) 781-1242			

OTHER AGENCY / ADVISORY GROUP INVOLVEMENT: The project was referred to: Public Works, Environmental Health, Building Division, and Templeton Area Advisory Group	
TOPOGRAPHY: Nearly level	VEGETATION: Grasses, scattered oak trees
PROPOSED SERVICES: Water supply: N/A Sewage Disposal: N/A Fire Protection: TCSD	ACCEPTANCE DATE: September 29, 2015

DISCUSSION

Project Site

The 1.86-acre project site is located on a hilltop at the end of Lincoln Avenue on the east side of Highway 101 in Templeton. The site is located just above the Templeton “T” visible from Highway 101. The site is developed with three existing water tanks owned by the Templeton Community Services District (TCSD) and several telecommunications facilities. Vegetation consists of grasses and scattered oak trees. Surrounding uses consist of single family residences and Templeton Middle School. An undeveloped TCSD parcel buffers the project site from residences to the north and east. Three residences are located immediately adjacent to the site’s westerly property boundary.

Figure 1: Site



Project History

Over the last couple decades, the project site has been developed with several telecommunications facilities. These existing facilities are collocated on the two westerly water tanks. There is also a 55-foot “slim line” monopole located on the same parcel just east of the water tanks. The existing facilities (primarily the panel antennas located on top of the southerly water tank) are primarily visible from the residential streets on the other side of Highway 101.

In 2010, T-Mobile installed eight panel antennas on the northerly water tank and ground-mounted equipment cabinets at the base of the tank under Minor Use Permit DRC2008-00013. T-Mobile’s panel antennas are visible from the neighborhoods across Highway 101, but to a lesser extent than the antennas on the southerly water tank.

Project Site

The purpose of the proposed project is to move T-Mobile’s eight existing panel antennas off the water tank due to concerns raised by TCSD’s engineers that the tank can no longer structurally support the antennas. The proposal is to remove the antennas from the tank and locate them on a new faux eucalyptus tree at the base of the water tank. The eucalyptus tree design was selected because it will blend with the oak tree backdrop. Faux oak trees are not available, and

it's been staff's experience that faux eucalyptus trees tend to appear more natural and realistic than faux pines ("monopines") especially when there are no adjacent pine trees. The project will use the existing ground-mounted equipment cabinets.

LAND USE ORDINANCE STANDARDS

Section 22.30.180 – Communications Facilities

This section of the Land Use Ordinance (LUO) describes specific permit and application content requirements as well as siting and design standards for proposed wireless communications facilities. The requirements of this section apply to communications transmission and receiving facilities in addition to all applicable permit requirements and standards of the FCC. As described below, the proposed project will meet these requirements:

Radio Frequency Analysis

Section 22.30.180(B) requires applications for communications facilities to include estimates of non-ionizing radiation generated and/or received by the facility. These shall include estimates of the maximum electric and magnetic field strengths at the edge of the facility site and the extent that measurable fields extend in all directions from the facility.

The project complies with this requirement because the applicant supplied a report to evaluate the proposed communications facility for compliance with appropriate guidelines limiting human exposure to radio frequency (RF) electromagnetic fields. According to the RF report for this project (Hammett and Edison, Inc.; September 17, 2015) the maximum cumulative RF emissions from the proposed and existing facilities would be approximately 4.8% of the FCC standard. The maximum calculated cumulative level at the second-floor elevation of any nearby building is 4.4 percent of the public exposure limit. The report concludes that the facility would operate within the FCC standard for RF emissions, and recommends that maintenance personnel notify the appropriate carrier prior to working in front of the antennas and that RF warning signs are posted at the base of the facility.

Permit Requirements

Section 22.30.180(C)(1) requires Minor Use Permit approval for proposed wireless communications facilities that are either a) installed on existing structures, or b) co-located at existing communications facility sites. Conditional Use Permit approval is required for all other communications facilities.

The project requires Minor Use Permit approval because it would be collocated at an existing telecommunications site and would replace an existing visible antenna array with a new faux eucalyptus tree, which would screen the antennas from public view.

Co-location

Section 22.30.180(C)(2)(b), when co-location is not proposed, applications for communications facilities must provide information pertaining to the feasibility of joint-use antenna facilities, and discuss the reasons why such joint-use is not a viable option or alternative to a new site.

The proposed project is consistent with this standard because it would be collocated at an existing telecommunications site containing facilities for several carriers.

Development Standards

Per Section 22.30.180(C)(3), the preferred placement for new wireless communication facilities is on existing structures, completely hidden from public view or painted and blended to match existing structures. In addition, all facilities shall be screened with vegetation or landscaping. Where screening with vegetation is not feasible, the facilities shall be disguised to resemble rural, pastoral architecture (e.g. windmills, barns, trees) or other features determined to blend with the surrounding area and be finished in a texture and color deemed unobtrusive to the neighborhood in which it is located.

The proposed project complies with the visual screening requirements of the Land Use Ordinance because the proposed antenna support structure will be a faux eucalyptus tree surrounded and backdropped by existing oak trees. As conditioned, the applicant will be required to provide specifications on the faux eucalyptus tree to ensure that it is as natural appearing as possible. All ordinance requirements will be included as conditions of approval for the proposed project to ensure compliance and to also ensure that visual impacts are less than significant.

Unused Facilities

Section 22.30.180(4) requires all obsolete or unused facilities to be removed within 12 months of cessation of communication operations at the site.

The project is consistent with this standard because the applicant is required to enter into a performance agreement and financial instrument for site restoration.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP COMMENTS

The proposed project was referred to the Templeton Area Advisory Group in August 2015, and no response was submitted.

AGENCY REVIEW

Public Works – No concerns.

Environmental Health – Amend hazardous materials plan with the Environmental Health Department if “modifications result in a change in the storage location or reportable quantities of any hazardous materials.”

LEGAL LOT STATUS

The one lot was legally created by a subdivision or deed at a time when that was a legal method of creating lots.

Staff report prepared by Airlin M. Singewald and reviewed by Karen Nall.